

PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION: In a Presidential proclamation designating October as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, President George W. Bush said: "During National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we renew our commitment to fighting the disease, raising awareness, and supporting those affected by breast cancer. My administration is committed to strengthening our nation's efforts against this devastating disease. Earlier this year I was pleased to sign the 'National Breast and cervical Cancer Early Detection Program Reauthorization Act,' which will allow us to continue helping low income and uninsured women gain access to vital cancer screening. In order to best detect and treat breast cancer, federal agencies are collaborating with national organizations, State health agencies, and other key groups to promote important disease education and prevention activities..."

South Indian TV channels highlight Pink Ribbon Day



PHOTO: A Jaya TV anchor wearing Post-supplied Pink Ribbon while reading a prime time news bulletin on October 30, 2007

Chennai PAS Jaya TV, Makkal TV; Malayalam channels Amritha TV, Indiavision TV; and Telugu channels ETV and TV9 had their news anchors pin pink ribbon during primetime news bulletins. In addition to pinning the pink ribbon while they read the news, the popular news anchors also read a small snippet on Breast Cancer Awareness and the significance of early detection.

U. S. Consulate General thanks the electronic media organizations for partnering with us in spreading awareness on breast cancer.

Mrs. Jeannie Mulford's Op-Ed reaches out to millions of vernacular readers in South India on Pink Ribbon Day

Two major dailies in south India, EENADU and VIJAYA KARNATAKA, have published Mrs. Jeannie Mulford's by-liner on Breast Cancer Awareness. The Op-Ed, the first hand account of fighting the cancer had stressed the need of spreading awareness and the importance of clinical examination as well as self and threw light on the dreaded disease and offered a ray of hope to many.

U. S. Consulate General, Chennai, thanks the print media organizations for partnering with us in spreading awareness on breast cancer.

Mrs. Jeannie Mulford's Op-Ed on Breast Cancer Awareness



Mrs. Jeannie Mulford, wife of U.S. Ambassador to India Mr. David C. Mulford

(By Mrs. Jeannie Mulford)

When the President of the United States asked my husband David if he would be willing to serve as the United States Ambassador to India, we sat down at the kitchen table and made what I now call the fastest big decision of our twenty-eight years together to go to India. The privilege and opportunity to return to public service, and what David referred to then as the unique moment in time in the U.S. and India relationship was compelling.

I did not know what to expect, but what we found after arriving, and what remains now with me, was that the Embassy was filled with wonderful people both Americans and Indians working side-by-side on so many fronts of endeavor to improve mankind and our important friendship with this remarkable country.

Everyday is a good day in India, filled with interest and challenge. It has been a privilege. I wish you could have experienced what I have.

And, that experience includes something I never dreamed of when I was packing for India. That I would return to the United States one year later from home in India to have a routine annual mammogram, and after being blessed with fifty-five years of near perfect good health, learn that I had breast cancer. That was two and a half years ago, and the very best part of the journey through those two and a half years, is what I have learned.

I thought I was afraid of cancer. I learned that I was not.

I learned that early detection of breast cancer saves lives.

I learned that if I was willing to speak openly about my breast cancer, that it might encourage other women to do the self-exams, clinical exams, and mammograms that could detect breast cancer in an early stage and therefore save their lives as it did mine.

The Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation, the world's largest grassroots network of breast cancer survivors and activists, estimates that by 2020, 70 percent of all cases of breast cancer will occur in developing countries, and that 70 percent of

those with breast cancer will receive a late-stage diagnosis. There is still time to change that prognosis, and with a global partnership, we can save the lives of thousands of women around the world.

Globally, breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women, and the second leading cause of deaths in women. The World Health Organization estimates that last year there were 1.2 million new cases of breast cancer diagnosed worldwide, 79,000 here in India. Tragically, more than 400,000 women die every year from breast cancer related causes worldwide, with more than 75 percent of these deaths occurring in the developing world.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The United States Government is committed to fighting this disease, raising awareness, and supporting those affected by breast cancer both at home and around the world. President Bush and Secretary Rice have both spoken about the need to support women fighting breast cancer, and to work together towards a cure for this disease. Secretary Rice has talked publicly about her mother's battle with breast cancer, and has supported efforts through the State Department around the world to raise awareness, encourage exams that will lead to early diagnosis, and beat breast cancer globally.

I have been told by women here in India that the discussion of breast cancer in some areas is somehow taboo. That because it is about breasts or more specifically about women's breasts, that it is difficult to discuss or bring attention to the subject. This must change. Cancer locates itself in all parts of the human anatomy. Men suffer from prostate, testicular and breast cancer. There should be no shame or stigma attached to the disease, and no taboo to an open and frank discussion of breast exams, treatment and life after cancer. A breast cancer diagnosis is not a death sentence.

Early detection of cancer can save your life, and I encourage all of you women and men alike to do your annual exams, learn the early warning signs of some cancers, do self-examination, take time from your busy schedule, save the money if you must pay for it yourself, spend it on something that can and will save your life. However unpleasant you think the test may be, it is nothing compared to what you could go through if you put it off.

Following my diagnosis and treatment, I have spoken to dozens of women of many nationalities throughout America and India who have faced the same battle. While it is a sisterhood none of us would have chosen, we are committed to work as partners to help other women who face the same fight and receive the early diagnosis and treatment that will let them lead full lives.

I am living proof that early detection saves lives and that routine exams can result in breast cancer detection at its earliest and most treatable stages. Breast cancer survival rates have improved over the past twenty years, and more women are surviving breast cancer than ever before. Early detection of the disease is key to survival. Nine out of ten women diagnosed with stage one breast cancer survive beyond five years, a figure which drops to around one out of ten diagnosed with advanced stage four breast cancer.

Until there is a cure for breast cancer, we must stand together to urge every woman to perform monthly breast self-exams and to see her doctor for annual clinical breast exams and mammography as appropriate.

Perhaps it was my destiny to come to India, discover that I had breast cancer and follow the journey to survival in order to share my story of hope and awareness with the tens of millions of women of India. If even one woman reads this and is moved to have an exam that exposes breast cancer in an early, treatable stage that saves her life, it will have been worth every minute of the journey for me.

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